Speedwells, Hebes - The Plantlife of Ratho

Veronica, Hebe • 2023-03-04 • Contact (FB) • Latest PDF • Folder of all Sections

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Speedwells

Heath Speedwell – Frequent in thin ground such as quarries : Ratho (Cement Works, EICA surrounds, Hillwood Quarry), Linburn Wood, Dalmahoy Hill & Kaimes Ridge, Calder Wood, Craigie Quarry.

Longish narrow leaves (2) when exposed (broad in woods (4)), hairy (2), the flowers varying from blue to purply to rosy to white, on rather short stalks (3). Creeping, often forming mats (1).

Veronica officinalis

Thyme-Leaved Speedwell – Frequent in damp spots in thin to short vegetation such as woods or damp ground.

Obscurely toothed leaves (2) (looking toothless) with a spike of pale flowers (1,2,5) marked with darker veins (3), the flower leaves (2,5) being smaller than the stem ones (2).

Veronica serpyllifolia

Brooklime – Frequent in shallow water or seasonal wet spots : Ratho (Centre bog wood, ditch SE of M8 bridge, Craigpark Quarry), Riccaton (stream), Linburn Wood, Gogar (burn & ditch by tramline), Clifton (R. Almondside), etc.

Generally distinctive; hairless plant (1,2,4) with paired spikes of flowers (2) emerging from the leaves, leaves obscurely toothed (1,4).

Veronica beccabunga

Blue Water-Speedwell – Rare : Ratho (field W of cement works), Riccarton (stream), also Kirkliston & Gogar 1934.
Fairly distinctive; with bluey flowers (1,3) with purple veins, only likely to be confused with the rare Pink Water-Speedwell which has white flowers with rosy veins.

Veronica anagallis-aquatica

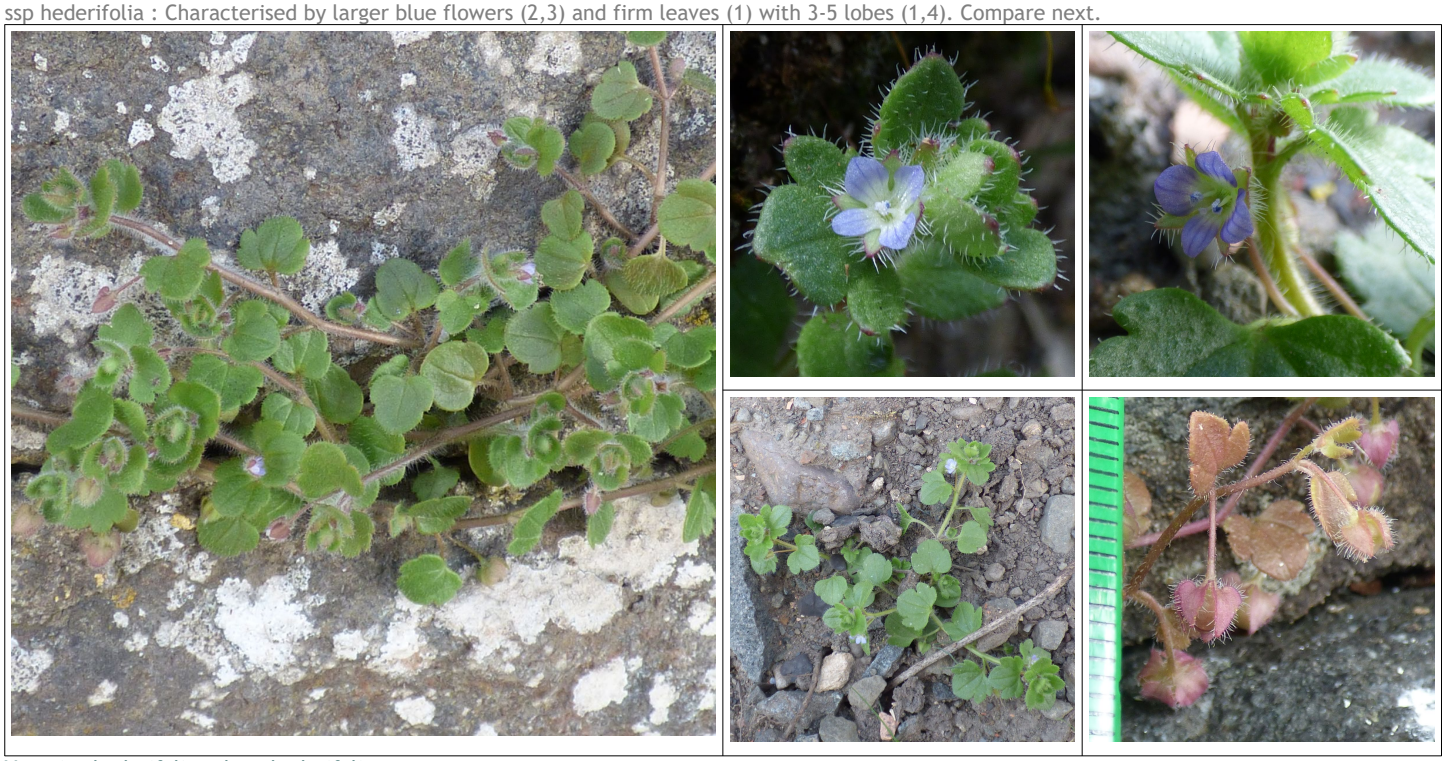
Pink Water-Speedwell – See above.
Veronica catenata

Slender Speedwell – Scattered in short grass : Ratho (in against Church Wall), old East Croft cut-through, East Croft grassy area; Ratho Station; Norton Farm; Union Canal to Clifton; Kirkliston; and beyond.
Flowers rather pale with a lilacy hint (5), on long thin flower stalks (2) emerging from small round leaves (2,3,4) smaller than the flowers.

Veronica filiformis

Ivy-Leaved Speedwell (exposed form) – Frequent in exposed places such as walls, path-sides, thin soils (e.g. wall opposite marina).

ssp hederifolia : Characterised by larger blue flowers (2,3) and firm leaves (1) with 3-5 lobes (1,4). Compare next.



Veronica hederifolia subsp. hederifolia

Ivy-Leaved Speedwell (woodland form) – Frequent in shaded spots (e.g. Lidgate Wood).

ssp lucorum : Characterised by smaller paler flowers (3) with weak leaves (1) with 5-7 lobes (3-4). Compare prior.

Veronica hederifolia subsp. lucorum

Wall Speedwell – Widespread on crumbly walls and thin ground.

The flowers (3) are bright blue and very small, on short stalks (3), often not opening fully and then hard to notice. The flower leaves (3) are like narrow tongues, the stem leaves (2,5) broad and often incised (5), sometimes much more of the stem leaves (2,4) or of the flower leaves (1). Plant rather hairy (5).

Veronica arvensis

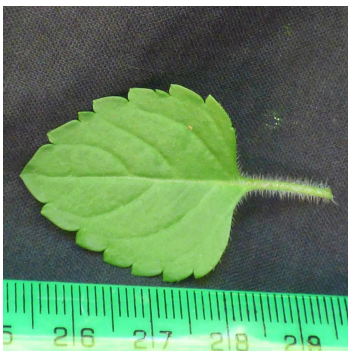
Germander Speedwell – Widespread in and beyond Ratho : e.g. Canal Path, Norton Quarry Field.

Flowers are generally pale-edged-(3), varying from bold blue to purply even on the same plant, forming spike pairs emerging from the leaves (2). The leaves tend to be elongated and slightly dull and blunt-toothed (4) compared to Wood and unstalked (2) though sometimes stalked. The stem (below the flowers) has two lines of hairs (5).

Veronica chamaedrys

Wood Speedwell – Patchily frequent in woods : Ratho (canalside bank approaching EICA), Gogar (golf club woods), Riccarton (woods), Clifton (woods by aquaduct), Almondell Country Park, Kirkliston (Dundas Loch).

Somewhat like Germander above but with leaves fresh green and broader (2,4), usually well-stalked (4,5), flowers paler purplish (3) that generally lack a sense of a white rim (ignoring the veins). The stems (below the flowers) are hairy all round (5).



Veronica montana

Field Common Speedwell – Common in thin ground and short vegetation e.g. field edges.

Flowers are usually sky blue (1) with paler (often white) lower petal (1,3), occasionally all blue; the stems to the flowers are generally much longer than the leaves (2,4). Fruits are formed of two wide-spreading lobes (5).

Veronica persica

Grey Field Speedwell – Rare : Ratho (Main St turning into School Wynd); also Kirkliston 1955.

Like the above but all petals bold blue (1,3), on stalks usually not longer than the leaves (1,3), the leaves becoming a little greyish looking with time (3). The capsules are formed of two lobes that are parallel (5), with short crisped hairs along with longer hairs (5 zoom).

Veronica polita

Green Field Speedwell – Rare : Ratho (canal path wall opp. Bridge Inn, possible now gone; Main St. NW end by pavement); Newbridge.

Flowers usually white (1,3) although may have some blue, leaves (1,2,3) fresh green, fruit (5) like Grey but without crisped hairs.

Veronica agrestis

Marsh Speedwell – Marshy ground : Balerno 1934 (current records in the Pentlands).
Distinctive with its narrow leaves.

Veronica scutellata • This pic from web by Arthur Haines on gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

Hebes

Willow-Leaf Hebe – Casual escape : Ratho (wall by Main St to centre woods cut-through, since removed).
White drooping flowers (1), with long narrow-pointed leaves (1,4), pairs of leaves forming a U-shape where they meet at the stem.

Veronica salicifolia